

Does Daniel 11 speak of two kings or three?

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Does Daniel 40-45 speak of a clash between two kings, or three? The traditional and historical interpretation understands the passage to speak of two kings: (1) The King of the North/Antichrist and (2) the King of the South. A more recent interpretation, having only become popular over the past hundred or so years argues that there are actually three kings: (1) the King of the North, (2) the King of the South, and (3) the Willful King/Antichrist.

The Two King View

The Arguments *for* the two king and *against* the three king interpretation may be summarized as follows:

1. The three king view violates the consistent flow of the whole prophecy, breaking the pattern of the entire passage. (See the charts below)
2. The three king view turns the historical types, which are enemies (King of North and King of South) into end time allies against a common enemy of which there is no historical type.
3. The three king view turns Antiochus into both a type of the Antichrist (throughout all of Daniel chapter 8 as well as Daniel 11:21-35) and a type of the Antichrist's greatest enemy (vv. 40-45).
4. Antiochus invaded Israel and fulfilled the pattern of that which the Antichrist is to accomplish in the last days.
5. The passage only emphasizes and goes into some detail concerning the invasion and defeat of the South (Egypt), but says nothing about the defeat or invasion of the realm of the North.

6. The Antichrist invades from the North, which is consistent with several other eschatological Antichrist prophecies. (e.g., Joel 2:1-27; Isa 10:12; 30:31-33; 31:8-9; Ezekiel 38,39).
7. Because this view minimizes Antiochus as a type of the Antichrist, it also forces a rejection of the clear correlation between the little horn of Daniel 8 and the little horn of Daniel 7.
8. The three king view conflicts with the universal interpretation of the early Church (see the list below) and is not found among interpreters until the late 19th century.
9. The grammar of the passage in no way requires there to be three subjects. (See for example, C.F. Keil's comments as well as J. Paul Tanner's comments, who although he takes the three king view, acknowledges its lack of grammatical support in JETS 35/3, Sept, 1992).

Interpreters who hold to the traditional two-king interpretation include the following:

Hippolytus of Rome (170–235)
Victorinus (d. 333)
Lactantius (240–320)
Ephrem the Syrian (306–373)
John Chrystostom (347–407)
Jerome (347–420)
Theodoret of Cyrrhus (393–457)
Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727)
John Gill (1697–1771)
John Wesley (1703–1791)
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1871)
S.P. Tregelles (1813–1875)
C.F. Keil (1813–1890)
John Nelson Darby (1800 – 1882)
J.E.H. Thompson, (1918)
Clarence Larkin (1850–1924)
William L. Pettingill, (1886-1950)

Arthur W. Pink (1886–1952)
G.H. Lang (1874–1958)
F.F. Bruce (1910–1990)
Charles L. Feinberg (1909–1995)
Arthur Petrie, (1960)
Edward J. Young, (1907–1968)
Philip R. Newell, (1962)
Geoffrey R. King, (1966)
Desmond Ford (1929–)
Robert D. Van Kampen (1938–1999)
Gleason L. Archer Jr. (1916–2004)
James Montgomery Boice, (1938–2000)
Joyce G. Baldwin
William H. Shea
Steven R. Miller
Jacques B. Doukhan
John Goldingay
David Guzik
Andrew E. Hill

The Three King View

The arguments for the three king interpretation may be summarized as follows:

1. A consistent interpretation of the pronouns in vv. 36-43 points to three, and not two kings:

At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack **him**; and the king of the North shall come against **him** like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and **he** shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. **He** shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from **his** hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. **He** shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. **He** shall have power over the treasures of gold and

silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Cush shall follow at his heels. —**Daniel 11:40-43**

2. If the two king interpretation is true, then the Antichrist is an end times leader from the Middle East, which conflicts with the popular Roman Antichrist theory. Thus the three king view is largely rooted in an arguably false presupposition imposed onto the passage.

Interpreters who hold to the three king interpretation include the following:

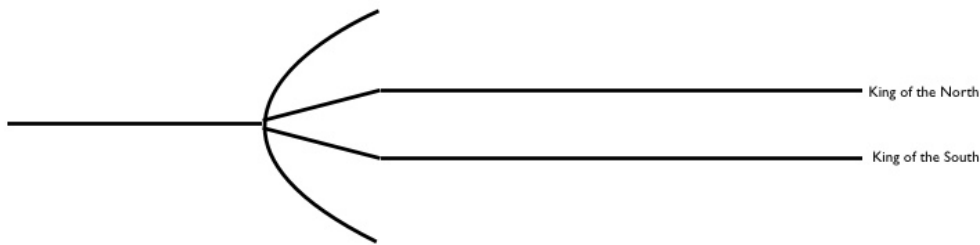
Sir Robert Anderson
H.A. Ironside
William Kelly
Arno Gaebelein
M.R. DeHaan
H.C. Leupold
Wm M. Smith
John Walvoord
Robert Culver
John C. Whitcomb
Leon Wood
Harry Bultema
Rodney Stortz
J. Dwight Pentecost
Renald E. Showers
Iain M. Duguid
Hal Lindsey
Timothy Lahaye
Mark Hitchcock
Ed Hindson
Arnold Fruchtenbaum
Ron Rhodes
Charles R. Swindoll
John Macarthur
Beth Moore

It is important to note that none of this view did not emerge until the early 1900s.

The Structure of Daniel 11 Charts:

The Structure of Daniel 11 (Two-King Interpretation)

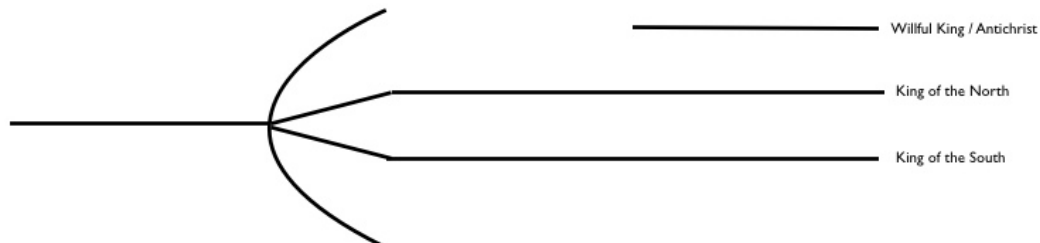
11:2	11:3	11:4	11:5-20	11:21-35	11:36-39	11:40-45
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Medo-Persia	Alexander the Great	Death of Alexander Division of his empire amongst four generals	Seleucid Dynasty "King of the North"	Antiochus IV Epiphanes Antichrist	Belief system and Actions of the Antichrist	Antichrist/ King of the North
			Ptolemaic Dynasty "King of the South"	Ptolemy VI Eschatological King of the South		King of the South
			Historical	Partial Historical / Partial Future	Future	Future

The Structure of Daniel 11 (Three-King Interpretation)

11:2	11:3	11:4	11:5-20	11:21-35	11:36-39	11:40-45
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